

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 03386 131841Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1885

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3386

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, LE, IS, US

1. I AM DEEPLY TROUBLED BY THE MOUNTING INDICATIONS THAT THE GOI IS PREPARING A MASSIVE STRIKE INTO LEBANON IN RETALIATION AGAINST SATURDAY'S TERRORIST ATTACK HERE. TALK CAN BE HEARD BY INFLUENTIAL ISRAELIS OF A TEN-TO-ONE CASUALTY RATIO AS BEING APPROPRIATE (37 ISRAELIS DIED AND 76 WERE WOUNDED ON MARCH 11). THE MOST LIKELY TARGET FOR SUCH A RAID WOULD BE SOUTHERN LEBANON, WHERE SOME OF THE TOP MILITARY AND POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE WANTED TO CLEAN HOUSE FOR MONTHS. THIS WOULD GIVE THEM A PERFECT EXCUSE TO DO SO.

2. I UNDERSTAND FULLY THE ISRAELI DETERMINATION NOT TO SUFFER MEEKLY ATROCITIES AT THE HANDS OF ITS ENEMIES. IT WOULD DO NO GOOD TO COUNSEL NO RESPONSE NOR WOULD SUCH ADVICE BE SOUND, IN MY VIEW. HOWEVER, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT THE KIND OF OPERATION THEY ARE PLANNING WILL RESULT IN THE DEATH OR INJURY OF MANY INNOCENT CIVILIANS. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE US CAN JUSTIFY EITHER MORALLY OR POLITICALLY SAYING NOTHING TO THE ISRAELIS IN THE FACE OF THIS ACCUMULATING EVIDENCE.

3. I PROPOSE THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO SEE WEIZMAN AS

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SOON AS POSSIBLE TO SAY THE FOLLOWING:

-- THE US UNDERSTANDS THE ISRAELI POLICY OF RETALIATION AGAINST TERRORIST ACTS.

-- WE URGE, HOWEVER, THAT ANY ISRAELI RESPONSE WOULD AVOID THE SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD. EITHER AIR STRIKES AGAINST REFUGEE CAMPS OR A SWEEP ACROSS SOUTHERN LEBANON RELYING ON HEAVY ARTILLERY WOULD, IN OUR VIEW,

ALMOST CERTAINLY FALL HEAVIEST ON INNOCENT CIVILIANS.

4. I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE ODDS WE WOULD FACE IN
CHANGING ANY ISRAELI PLANS, BUT I BELIEVE THE EFFORT SHOULD
BE MADE. THIS GAME MAY WELL KICK OFF WHEN THE WEATHER
HERE CLEARS, SO IF WE ARE TO ACT IT MUST BE AT ONCE.

5. FOR S/S: PLEASE ENSURE THAT AMBASSADOR LEWIS RECEIVES
A COPY OF THIS MESSAGE TODAY.
VIETS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, ATROCITIES, TERRORISTS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV03386
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840140-2475, N780003-0423
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780374/aaaackqx.tel
Line Count: 72
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6102f6c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3348434
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TERRORISM ATTACK
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, LE, IS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6102f6c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014